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SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W, INR/AA (BGRAVES)

E.O. 12958

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SUBJECT: NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION FINISHES NATIONAL ELECTIONS  
TALLY, WILL ANNOUNCE CERTIFIED RESULTS AUGUST 25

REF: A) FREETOWN 501 B) FREETOWN 493 C) FREETOWN 486 D) FREETOWN 484

E) FREETOWN 481

¶1. (U) On the evening of August 23, the National Electoral Commission released the official preliminary results of the August 11 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. NEC Chairperson Dr. Christiana Thorpe announced the certified results will be published on August 25.

¶2. (U) In the parliamentary elections, NEC officials reported the All People's Congress (APC) won a parliamentary majority taking 59 of 112 seats, while the ruling Sierra Leone's People's Party (SLPP) took 43 seats. The People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), the splinter party formed in 2006 by former SLPP party stalwart Charles Margai, won 10 seats in Parliament.

¶3. (U) As anticipated, NEC Chairperson Thorpe announced there will be a presidential runoff scheduled for either September 6 or 8 because no presidential candidate received the requisite 55 percent for victory. NEC official results show APC presidential candidate Ernest Koroma won 44.3 percent of the total 1,839,208 votes cast, while current Vice President and SLPP presidential candidate Solomon Berewa finished second with 38.9 percent. PMDC presidential candidate Charles Margai placed third receiving 13.9 of the vote. The remaining four presidential candidates received less than four percent of the popular vote.

¶4. (U) Voter turnout was 75.8 percent with 1,984,106 voters going to the polls. There were 144,898 invalid votes or 7.3 percent. According to NEC officials, this is below the internationally acceptable standard for invalid votes in post-conflict countries which is about 10 percent, yet in comparison only 3.9 per cent of votes were found to be void in Liberia's 2005 election. NEC officials blamed the number of voided votes on insufficient voter education.

¶5. (SBU) Per Reftel A message, it will be imperative that there is a greater presence of international observers during the presidential runoff election to counter electoral fraud. Post will report full certified results septel. Post also will plan and report runoff election monitoring program septel.

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